

# Vacant Property Review Commission

*Summary - December 17, 2013*

**Members present:** Chip Crawford, David O'Neill, Martina Ockerman, Bill Johnston, Karen Deprey, Shevawn Akers.

**Also in attendance:** Derek Paulsen, David Barberie, Jonathan Hollinger, Leah Boggs

Meeting called to order at 10:00am

Paulsen spoke about the purpose of the commission and the processes involved.

Motion by Bill Johnston, seconded by Karen Deprey to elect Chip Crawford as Chair. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Bill Johnston, seconded by Karen Deprey to elect Martina Ockerman as Vice Chair. Passed unanimously.

Paulsen introduced a pilot database of vacant properties based on water service, LexCall, and Code Enforcement. This list was just in the central sector of Lexington, but will be expanded to the whole city.

Barberie discussed the process of certifying properties and taxing them at the abandoned property rate.

The commission discussed the process and whether or not it is worth going through if the impact is limited. There was also discussion about if this will make it more difficult to purchase a property to get it out of vacancy. In some instances, taxes are what has forced many people to put a property up for sale.

It was suggested that when a new buyer acquires the property, a clear mechanism to get off the list is necessary.

Barberie discussed the limitations on taxing authority imposed by state law. The properties must be moved into the tax district on January 1 in order to be taxed at the abandoned property rate. If there is not a list they cannot be taxed.

There was discussion of the value of the list, other tools can be used besides taxation.

The commission discussed ways to identify properties throughout the city, and methods to keep owners from finding loopholes in the laws regarding vacant and abandoned property.

Barberie spoke about eminent domain, this method requires funding from the city. The city would have to identify that is legally blighted, file eminent domain, and then pay fair market value.

There were questions about the certification of the tax roll and taxing districts. There is a listing period required in most instances. Barberie stated that the listing period does not apply to this program to his knowledge.

Paulsen stated that he will continue to work on the list of properties and update the commission.

The commission decided to meet on the third Wednesday of every month, at 10:00am in the Phoenix Building.

Meeting adjourned.